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Question Time: Multi-level marketing opinions

Have you or someone you know been a part of one?

By Rob Burgess
Tribune night editor

[**Editor's note:** To participate in future queries, keep an eye on our Twitter and Facebook accounts.]

From Avon to Amway to MonaVie to Herbalife to AdvoCare to Mary Kay, you've probably encountered or even been a part of a multi-level marketing company by this point. They seem to everywhere, especially given the rise of social media. So, we wanted to know: "Have you or any of your friends or family members been involved in a multi-level marketing company? What is your opinion of them?"

Your answers

"Yes, I am. I have been since 2012, and don't plan on stopping! I love doing what I want when I want." — **Anthony Landrum**

"Pyramid scam." — **Kim Huskins**

"A pyramid scam requires people to pay the people above them out of their own profits. For example, if Mary signed up underneath Lucy and Lucy

makes 5 percent commission off of Mary's sales, then Mary would have to pay Lucy out of her own profits. In MLM, our direct sales companies, you NEVER have to pay the person above you out of your own profits, they are paid directly from the company! I hope that clears up the misconception that all direct sales companies are pyramid scams, because they are not!" —

Christa Langham

Our answers

"My wife got involved with Mary Kay a few years back and really enjoys the benefits. She's a certified salesperson now, and with her busy schedule, still finds the time to sell enough product to pay for her own cosmetics." — **Josh**

Sigler

"I bought a Kirby from a door-to-door salesman a few years ago. It's the best darn vacuum! I have no regrets! I don't know if that really counts though." — **Jill Bond**

"I know these companies aren't technically pyramid schemes, but when I look at the business model involved it certainly looks very similar. The differences seem somewhat technical and the chance of turning a profit is still vanishingly small. However, I'm willing to give them the benefit of the doubt. And for people like Josh's wife who are in it with the right expectations and goals it seems like it could be perfectly fine. What is wrong, at least to me, is when people put all their eggs in this basket,

expect it to provide them a steady income and then proceed to annoy and alienate everyone close to them in pursuit of a 'downline.'" — **Rob Burgess**

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